

[The Cowboy and the Riveter]

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New York City THE COWBOY AND THE RIVETER

We were on the riveting gang driving by hand; we picked up a Western guy to buck rivets for me.

A fellow by the name of Big Bill Hearn says to him, "Slim, can you buck?" "Oh," he says, "I was never knocked off a rivet in my life." So I, like a good friend of him, asked how old is he. He says he was 28 years old.

Bill says to him, "Got any friends in the undertakin' business?" He says, "No and I don't need any."

"Well," he says, "get on the rivet." We stuck a rivet in, O. K. "He held that up fine and dandy. Bill says, "By gosh, you're good." "Ah," he says, "you can hit it as hard as you like."

By the time it was finished, he had a cold rivet stuck in red lead. Its It's nice and red and he put it in the hole. The westerner gets on the rivet. Bill Hearn hits the rivet and the westerner goes out like a light. The dolly bar goes in the hole and the Westerner after the dolly bar. He fell out twenty feet.

The cold rivet is so hard it knocks the man immediately. He must have turned three times over before he landed. When he landed he said, "Jesus Christ that son of a bitch can hit." I slid down the column but Bill stayed up there. Bill says, "Ask him if he got any friends in the undertakin' business." We shook him up, revived him and he sat up but he refused to get up. He was sitting on his po poo. I said to him, "Got any friends in the undertakin' business?"

"No," he says. "But I've got a friend that's a cemetery caretaker." [He?] says, "I'll never buck up a rivet in the east while I stay here. You Irish are too tough for a cowboy." He bought us a drink and he says he learned something for two drinks of whiskey that he would have paid a fortune to know before, so he parted.

I believe he's still going. He'll never come back. He never did find out that was a cold rivet.